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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1499

UNCLAS VALLETTA 000161

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SNAR AFIN MT
SUBJECT: MALTA: 2007 END USE MONITORING REPORT

REF: SECSTATE 40875

¶1. Re ref tel, the two eighty-seven foot "Protector" class patrol boats provided to the Armed Forces of Malta in November 2002 and July 2004 continue to be the backbone of the Maritime Squadron. To date, the boats have been kept in top condition by well-trained crews and an extensive supply of spare parts that came with the original FMS cases. Those spare parts are now running low and it will now be incumbent on the Government of Malta to properly fund the maintenance of these boats. GOM is exploring the processes by which it can do this including using national and grant FMF funds in a blanket FMS case.

¶2. During the summer months, the "Protector" class patrol boats are primarily used for illegal migrant search and rescue missions as well as for illegal migrant patrols in the waters between Malta and Libya. In the fall, winter and spring, the boats are primarily used to combat illicit activities in Maltese territorial waters. In 2006, one of the boats was used in a Counternarcotics operation. While no drugs were seized, the general consensus is that the operation forced the smugglers to abandon the contraband at sea before it could be delivered.

BORDONARO